

**RAISED BILL NO. S.B. 6616 AN ACT ESTABLISHING WOOD SMOKE TO BE A PUBLIC NUISANCE.**

To require the Commissioner of Public Health to amend the Public Health Code to declare that certain wood smoke emissions shall constitute a public nuisance.

**Chairs Senator Jonathan Harris, Representative Betsy Ritter, and Members of the Public Health Committee:**

My name is David Miller and I live in Milford, Connecticut. We live in a densely populated beach area where the houses are approximately 10 feet apart. Our neighbor has an outdoor fire pit in their front yard approximately five feet from our property line and burns wood for extended periods of time. These fires create a dense smoke that not only permeates the area around our home and neighborhood; it also enters our home causing us to be subjected to the smoke and any related health issue without restraint, controls, or recourse.

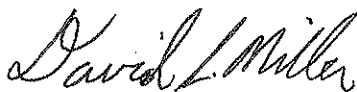
In order to reduce the effects of this smoke, we must close all windows and doors and move to the opposite side of the house. In the spring and summer, when others are enjoying fresh air from outside, we are prisoners in our home with windows shut and air conditioners on to help prevent breathing in these fumes. At times, we suffer from coughs, irritated eyes, and feel nauseous. Our son has been diagnosed with asthma, and this aggravates his condition. We have talked to our neighbor about some alternatives to reduce the smoke, but he continues to use the fire pit for his recreation believing it is his right to do so. He believes he can put us at risk creating a fire 10 feet from our home (structure), 5 feet from my driveway where my children could be playing, creating billowing smoke that we are forced to breathe and suffer the consequences.

As of now, it seems he is within his right to put us at risk as there is no clearly stated law or ordinance that prevents this outrageous situation. In Milford, an open burning ordinance was progressing through the committees but was withdrawn several times because of conflicts with the Connecticut Statutes. Additionally, the ordinance itself exempted campfires because of existing Connecticut statute. I have addressed the Milford Board of Alderman on this subject and listened to many other residents giving testimony about how they too are suffering respiratory issues from breathing in fumes from all types of wood burning appliances.

We have contacted our mayor, fire department, health department, planning and zoning, and the DEP. All were in agreement there is no current restriction on this type of burning despite the obvious need. In order to help on the local level, we need the legislature to address the issue at the state level. Wood smoke is a public health nuisance and this legislature should say so.

The public is aware that smoking cigarettes and second hand smoke are harmful, but many are not aware that breathing wood smoke is just as bad, or possibly worse, than cigarette smoke.

Everyone has the right to breathe clean air. Allowing the unregulated creation of smoke pollutants and threatening the health of others is inhumane. We urge you to make wood smoke a public nuisance under the public health code to protect our children, the chronically ill, and the elderly.



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